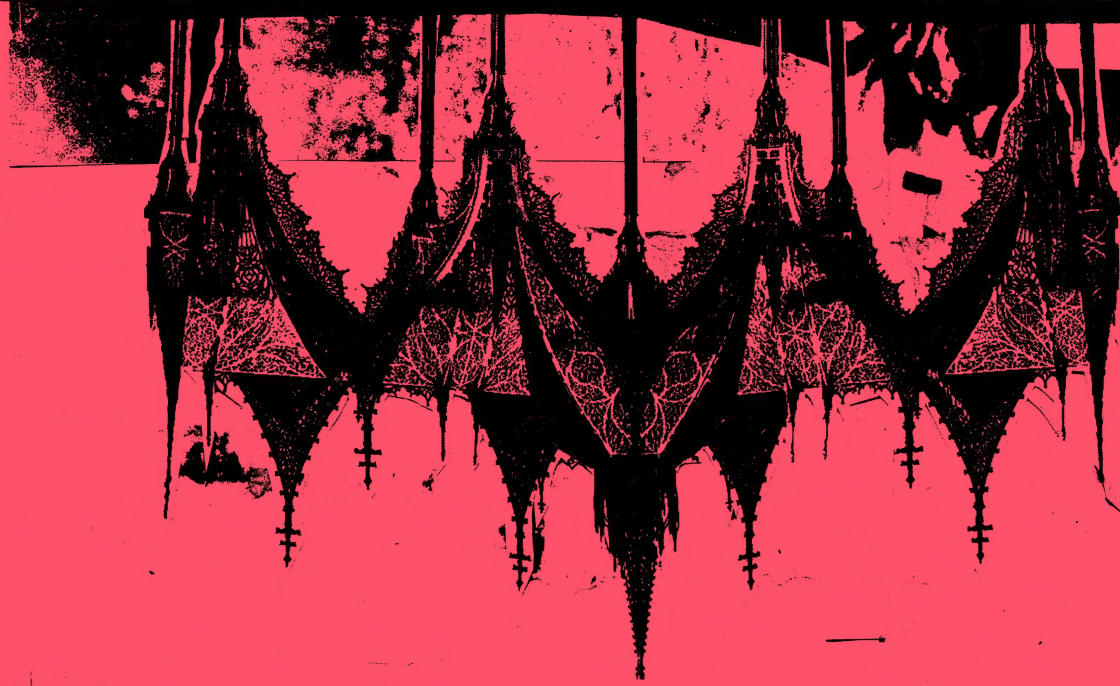


Boothaeven



BOOTHAEVEN'S magazine issue eight, winter 2023. Interviews with The Specter, A.S.K.E., Southern Spruce, Coldgate | Eternal Delight and Weathered Crest. Extra contribution by Pedé from Alkerdeel.





Boothaeven's Magazine

the zine that really ties your room together

In hindsight the seventh issue of Boothaeven's Magazine wasn't my best effort, number eight might just be. Except for this one's introduction which in all fairness is utter crap. The main issue at hand is that I simply haven't got much to say ... nothing really.

I deleted the drivel I wrote down, tried something else, deleted it again. Kept the previous phrase, just to show you the seize of the writer's block I'm dealing with.

Obviously, I could mention some noteworthy 2022 releases, but that will only be semi interesting at best. Given the fact that you know about this publication, you surely are familiar with the bands I have in mind.

At one point writing a few lines about gigs I went to the past year seemed like introduction worthy material (for reasons that are now no longer clear). Then it dawned on me that more often I opted for the satisfying comfort of indoor home living. Apparently fear of missing out is not something I worry about

Either way, I meant to reduce the amount of word blubber anyway; going for a somewhat tighter issue; no fun, no core, no trends, nada, nothing but a handful of interviews.

Speaking of, thrilled to have these fine gentlemen answering a few questions:

William Watts: the man behind the notorious Anti-Social Kultur England label. Home of the Occulted Death Stance, Scum F.C. Odintyr, among others.

Pede Alkerdeel: not an Alkerdeel interview, simply talking music, master to pupil.

Abu-Bakr al-Uppsalawi shedding light on Southern Spruce, another distinctive project from Uppsala's enigmatic End Commune, baby.

The Specter: Can one really envisage contemporary BM in the Netherlands without coming across this man's work in one way or another?

The individuals behind Cold Gate and Eternal Delight. If the duo interview may lead to only one thing, then let it be you checking out that Bleak Existence record of theirs.

J. Meindlumer. Think Weathered Crest, Bränd, Födweg. Great music thus. And so a subtle whiff of postpunk makes an entrance to a once again very blackened edition of the zine.

OK, uninspired as I am I won't even try to bridge the upcoming paragraph in a coherent way. Just bounce right into some words of appreciation.

to other zine makers for the inspirational effort they put in this desperately obsolete medium. My War, No Fuss (man, what an undertaking that second issue is), Ball Of Destruction, Rage, Black Blood, Black Book, Down and Out/Nocturnal Emissions, Gloomhammer, Banner Of Evil, Addergebroed ... I tip my hat to thee all!

And evidently to you, for showing interest in the zine.

Merci!

Allez hop, now pour yourself a glass of wine, it's clobberin' time.

Ghent, Belgium.

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Coldgate

Eternal Delight

"black metal justifies any kind of lifestyle"

COLDGATE



The COLDGATE debut album was one of those records I randomly bumped into, yet haven't stopped listening to since. It's noisy, harsh and disturbing, it has freakishly weird vocals but at the same time it's catchy and beautiful in its own way.

What inspired you to create this album, and more in general, what lead up to you forming COLDGATE?

COLDGATE:

The album was written during the quarantine period. At this point I wasn't having much fun, I was abusing substances every day, drinking, smoking, etc.

The Corvalol track is about me abusing pharmacy drugs (I overdosed on barbiturates, after which I slept for more than 24 hours straight and my roommate thought I was dead). Roughly speaking, I was not in the most stable state, and occasionally, through this blackout, I had flashbacks with touching memories of past relationships with different people. I realized that I had nothing to lose and could experiment with the sound, sublimating the feelings into what later turned out to be the debut album of COLDGATE. By the way, I made my first BM demos 12 years ago.

That COLDGATE album turned into "ED01": what persuaded you into releasing it?

Eternal Delight (Colour O):

By 2020 there was enough unrealized energy accumulated in my circle of friends with similar ideas about music that it pushed me to create a label. When COLDGATE showed me his black metal demo, I realized that I had never heard anything like it, and this album was bound to be the first release of Eternal Delight.

In a nutshell, COLDGATE's debut album is bedroom black metal, but when your bedroom is a liminal space. And those vocals sound like something in-between a child's cry and the whimpering of a beaten dog. They are inhuman, more than human cries of misery. It is as if the very concept of existence is terrified of being imprisoned in the physical world, and its screams of suffering burst from the world of forms into the material realm.

Most likely COLDGATE is the sole band I know from Tbilisi, or even Georgia for that matter. Same goes for Eternal Delight as a label. Is there a vivid and artistic underground music scene over there? Bands or artists that we might want to check? And in general: how 's life over there?

COLDGATE:

I didn't go anywhere because I live in a slum at this moment. My head is busy with other fucking things right now. I don't know much about the Georgian scene, but before I came here I liked the Georgian black metal / death rock band Psychonaut 4. Before that I lived in Russia, which I left in September.

Eternal Delight (Colour 0):

Long story short, I left Russia when it waged a full-scale war on Ukraine. I've only been here for six months, but I can say that electronic music is a big thing over here, there are plenty of local producers and DJs, and major techno musicians play here every week. As for other music, I loved Psychonaut 4 (black metal) and Plakqsa (a 90's dream pop act) long before I moved to Georgia.

Unfortunately, I haven't had enough time to study the local scene yet, but already being in Georgia, I recognized TeTe Noise who is doing something between industrial, IDM, and ambient, and is also collaborating with contemporary classical orchestras. By the way, he has a metal background and he still does live shows with his band. Thanks to him I also learned about the label For No Reason which released an IDM and ambient compilation entirely by Georgian musicians.

Out of the great variety of Tbilisi musical venues, my favorite is Mutant Radio (<https://mutantradio.net/>). Surprisingly enough, it is on this community radio that you can hear the most amazing and (I don't like this word, but still) experimental live and DJ sets. Be sure to surf through their archived recordings and keep an eye out for new ones, there's always something interesting there. A detail that speaks of Mutant Radio in a nutshell: the showcase of the electro-industrial label Sons Of Traders finished with tracks by Nurse With Wound in a DJ set by Ninasupsa.

Furthermore, a lot of Eastern European musicians have moved to Tbilisi now, playing music ranging from indie to noise, and there are periodic events with their participation in such places as Secret Place, Dust, Junkyard, Mutant Radio, etc.





It saddens me to hear that the political situation forced you to leave your country; obviously I wasn't aware of that... It's grotesque that a small elite still has that amount of power that they can conflict terror and woe on entire populations, even "their own". A zine like this isn't the designated platform to analyse the political side of the conflict, but were you aware pretty early-on that this could go terribly wrong (even with state-controlled media)?

How is your current situation these days; I assume returning to Russia equals obligatory military service and therefor isn't really an option...

Eternal Delight (Colour O):

Long before 2022, even the most persistent opposition had been destroyed. The people were more divided than ever and faced with conditions that prevented mass consolidation, solidarity and protest. The social situation that has emerged from the shards of the USSR is unique and extremely depressing, and political scientists and philosophers are currently discussing a number of causes for this.

In spite of all this, I did not believe that a full-scale war could start, as this would be suicidal not only for Russia's development as part of the world community but also for the Putin regime as well. As we saw later, this was not obvious to the top authorities, perhaps because of the practice developed over the years of telling the bosses only good news and citing only the "right" statistics and analytics.

Yes, it is unsafe to return to Russia now. With persistence and luck, there is a chance for those who remain there not to be drafted. However, living in an extremely authoritarian state is not only dangerous, but also unbearable if you actually understand what is going on.

Оглянуться не успела,
Как зима катит в глаза.
Помертвело чисто поле;
Нет уж дней тех светлых боле,
Как под каждым ей листком
Был готов и стол, и дом.

Obviously that explains the fact that Eternal Delight is temporarily inactive. On a very, very different level, I too struggled with the idea of working on something as idle as a DIY zine while this war continues to rage on. Then I figured that taking the liberty of expressing disagreement over this war is a position that not everyone is even entitled to... Maybe you are in that position yourself? I mean, you take a clear stance by exchanging Eternal Delight output for donations to Ukrainian Red Cross or ОВД-Инфо, but isn't that risky?

Eternal Delight (Colour O):

When Russia launched its war against Ukraine, we were all stunned. We were restrained and did not feel in a position to release anything. Unfortunately, it seems that this war is here to stay for a long time. Yes, I agree with you that we should probably take the liberty of expressing our disagreement over this war whenever we can. Soon we'll start releasing again. Besides that, music and art are what we all live for.

We're a small and somewhat anonymous label, so I think we're in a position where we can express disagreement. On the other hand, you can't be certain of anything in modern Russia anymore, but we don't really plan to go back there either.

Let's return to music and art. COLDGATE, you mentioned that you released your first BM demos twelve years ago. Was that already under the COLDGATE moniker? How did you set out into actively making BM music?

COLDGATE:

At that time a lot of my friends were listening to deathcore and other heavy genres that were fashionable then. I always hated all that, because what I liked most about music was the magic and the atmosphere. I had no other uplifting entertainment besides writing music, so I just wrote releases for the desk drawer. They were never released anywhere and remained buried on burned-out hard drives years ago.

It seems like more BM from Russia reaches Europe these days; for instance music related to the Horrible Room label is quite "popular". Nonetheless, I suppose the more local or underground stuff remains unknown to most of us (the Cyrillic alphabet doesn't help either). Is there a 'hidden gem' from your country you could recommend?

COLDGATE:

Oh, that is interesting, I did not really know that label. One of the specific features of our nation is atomization and hatred towards each other, so the members of the Russian BM scene do not really know each other.

The biggest Russian BM bands I've always liked are the культура курения (albums up to 2015) and the Kalendae. I was at a Kalendae show in 2011 and it's still one of the most impressive concerts of my life.

Eternal Delight (Colour 0):

When it comes to obscure BM gems, I can recall the band Вечночернь.

Until recently, I played atmospheric black metal in a band called HVØSCH. There is quite a big scene of post-black in my hometown, featuring bands such as Ypres, Trna, Beauty of Sirin, etc.

But seven years ago I was more into emoviolence and related genres. There are few bands around the world that are still playing these genres, so it is quite obscure. I can recall acts such as Eyrie, Buran, LORA, EIRGA, Aspergers, Weieiei, Khnutt, Moé, Dierrection, and MU UR.

Also on heavy "rotation" here is the HKCR COLDGATE / Eternal Delight mix. Kinda funny when you think about the fact that I've been listening to mashed-up Eastern Block hip-hop and Xasthur songs played at the wrong speed. Love it though! How did you come-up with the idea to do a mix like that, and how does it end-up on a Hong Kong Community Radio of all stations? Can we expect more of that to come? Also, out of sheer curiosity: I recognized Xasthur, but what other BM was decelerated?

COLDGATE:

The reason I made the mix is that I was invited to play at a party in an abandoned fort on an island. There I was playing dungeon synth and harsh noise. While I was preparing the set, one time I accidentally mixed these genres with hip-hop. Apart from BM, I've been listening to hip-hop for about 14 years now, but by the way, I never liked the hip-hop tracks from this mix, they always seemed cringy to me. Anyway, I did it just for fun. Another similar mix will be released soon, made entirely of demo recordings by the band Многоточие (Mnogotochie).

Other black metal bands in the mix: Gorgoroth, COLDGATE, Velvet Cacaoon, Xasthur (actually, the track by Xasthur was put from the CD). By the way, at 45:30 my hip-hop demo is mixed with the material from the new album.





Eternal Delight (Colour Q):

COLDGATE showed me this mix, and I decided to try to run a monthly show on HKCR to release it. I just wrote to HKCR and they agreed to take us on, for which we are very grateful. This show will feature mixes from all the friendly artists that are looking in the same direction as us.

As I understood from COLDGATE's own explanation, that mix is the default background of his consciousness when it is not occupied with anything else. In other words, his thoughts are filled with snippets of old cliched lines from hip-hop, familiar to every ex-USSR person of our age, as well as ambient and black metal atmospheres.

"Playing in an abandoned fort on an island" sounds like a pretty exciting experience! You mentioned it rather casually, so I'm guessing this wasn't the craziest "venue" you winded up at... What were in fact the most peculiar places or situations you ended up?

COLDGATE:

The party in the fort was the second performance in my life. I'm a home studio nerd.

Eternal Delight (Colour Q):

I would add that COLDGATE's first live show was at the Rosa's House of Culture. It's a space that was created by the Chto Delat? art collective, which is now illegal in Russia.

A COLDGATE track appeared on the "No Masters Except God" tape compilation released by Eternal Delight. The tape was accompanied by a William Blake text fragment wherein he denounces a religious resentment towards the bodily. Was there a religious theme to the tape? Please elaborate.

Eternal Delight (Colour Q):

Yes, I can characterize the ideological content of Eternal Delight as neo-Gnostic Christian Anarchism. The very title of the

compilation is the old anarchist slogan "No gods, no masters", remade in a Christian way. I believe that the early Christians were the first anarchists. No man has the right to oppress another man, and only God should be our supreme judge. The overcoming of religious resentment towards the bodily of the dogmatic Christianity is revealed in Neo-Platonic Gnosticism and justifies the struggle for our rights on this earth. These ideas are more fully revealed in the work of the philosopher Vladimir Soloviev (1853 - 1900), who was a Christian anarchist and neo-Gnostic.

"Neo-Gnostic Christian Anarchism"; that sounds like a lot of very paradoxical stances combined. How does that insight influences your life? Does it reflect on Eternal Delight as well? Also: isn't it somewhat awkward to believe in a form of Christianity whilst being into black metal, a genre notorious for criticizing religion?

Eternal Delight (Colour Q):

This seems paradoxical only at first glance. Early Christianity was not a unified doctrine and numerous eclectic variants of it have come down to this day under the name of Gnosticism. Christianity was originally a protest against the Roman metropolis and the rigid hierarchy of Judaism at the time, and it was made possible in many ways by all of humanity's previous philosophical achievements. The most emancipatory of these was probably ancient philosophy, which became the progenitor of Christianity through Gnosticism. In short, Christianity was a reversal from the archaic order to the value of the Individual, a trait most revealed in Christian Gnosticism.

I find it interesting to wonder how much it affects my life. I would say it is its foundation, without adherence to any particular dogma.

Not that I would want to keep it a mystery as to how it affects Eternal Delight but it can hardly be put into words.

As everyone knows, a phenomenon moves in its development until it reaches its exact opposite. The aggressive anti-religiousness of the origins of BM is essentially as religious as possible. Besides, criticism of religion is a good thing! This prevents it from becoming rigid and degenerate, which, unfortunately, happened to so-called Christianity because of clericalization and fusion with the state. Furthermore, the Gnostics were labelled heretics for their criticism of dogma and council Christianity.

That's an interesting thought to end the interview. One more thing though: what does it mean, this Black Metal thing, to you?

COLDGATE:

Black metal justifies any kind of lifestyle.

Eternal Delight (Colour Q):

Black Metal was born in a counterculture as a protest against commercialization and hypocritical Christian piety. Apart from that, what I appreciate most in music is tension, which Black Metal has a lot of, thanks to the screaming vocals and the minor melodic. And the blastbeat is so overpowering to that affective subconscious that it takes you into transcendence. So that's the secret.

THE BEE HIVE? ETO DELTA? TAK NOTH XS, ECLIPSE



Anti-Social Kultur England

interview with William Watts



Gym:

Yeah Yeah Yeahs : *Heads Will Roll* hardstyle
(Sub Zero Project Bootleg)

Jakazid : *Make it Werk*

Hard Bass School : *Haww Gumh*

Knightvision : *Who Is It*

Hammer House : *The Jumper* (Mass Medium
Remix)

Non chav music:

Rouance : *Collected Tracks 2003-2007*

Metgumbnerbone : basically any of their
stuff.

Atlantean Blood : *Dreams Of The Black Sun*

The Brass : *Desperation*

Ossetian folk music

Musta Enemistö

Gurdjieff/De Hartmann compositions

Cold Gate : *st*

Крючокрест : specifically set to a montage of
the Ukraine war.

Кандидаты Ада : *Великое Загнивание*

Non music:

Head cam war footage on telegram.

Nate Diaz vs Tony Ferguson

Cyril Gane vs Tai Tuivasa

The eye gouging matches/drama with King of
the Streets fights (I dont support eye
gouging btw but it was an insane window back
to the circus maximus or a shadow of a
brutal future)

War as an Inner Experience by Ernst Jünger

The Firm directed by Alan Clarke

ANTI-SOCIAL KULTUR

England

The amount of bands and projects you're
involved with is baffling. I don't know
whether there are bands/projects that you
deem more important than others, and it
probably doesn't matter anyway, but the fact
that you're in them must lead to some kind
of a constant factor: what is it that you're
trying to bring forth with the sounds you're
creating? What do you want to express, and
what do you want to trigger at the level of
your audience?

Well the main thing is that I want people to
think I'm cool. But apart from that it's all
stuff that I want to hear, like bands and
music that should exist in my perfect world.
Also I'm chasing the dragon, trying to get
that same initial hit that you would get
when you are 11 years old picking up an Iron
Maiden record and going "what the FUCK is
this!?", when you have a physical sensation
in your brain and body, I call it brain
fizzle.

Ha, brain fizzle, exactly! That's probably
why the lot of us keep on searching for that
new thing, despite all the second-class
rubbish that surrounds it (especially in
genres that don't require any musical talent
per se to begin with). What were the latest
finds that did it for you?

It's quite rare so it's not exactly "latest"
but these are some big ones that came to
mind.



I assume it's no coincidence that the abbreviation of Anti-Social Kultur England is A.S.K.E. Perhaps a reference to burned matter, an amphibious animal or just Burzum? The latter being your go-to-project as far as BM goes?

I enjoy twisting and bending things, using trickery and having multiple meanings. It's why I wish I could read German as *Faust* is apparently full of this. Burzum is an all-time great. *Filosofem* is a piece of true art that will stand the test of time, that is unless we become irradiated cockroach food. However, Immortal's *Battles in the North* or Arghoslent /Grand Belial's Key get more play at the gym.

Why did you start A.S.K.E. and in what way does it differ from Mongoloid Productions? What does it take for a band to wind up on the label?

Mongoloid was just me fucking about not having a clue what I was doing, pumping out cringe. Actually I have never heard of Mongoloid. I don't know what you are talking about.

A.S.K.E. was definitely more of a 'mission', seeding aesthetics and sounds in the mental craw of the underground.


To be on the label your band must be

A. good or interesting B. British
and C. not lefty/pedo

It's curious that you make a distinction between good and interesting. I get it though: not seldom am I drawn to something that is most definitely not very good in an obvious sense, yet it appeals and intrigues on another level. That's probably the merit of a label like A.S.K.E. for me personally: the chance of meeting a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissection table.

Haha strange mental image but I like it (sort of). Well you know this stuff we are talking about "brain fizzle" etc. it's like from putting yourself into a new experience, going to the edge of the village and into the dark forest. You have no map to get home and maybe you will be raped by a badger or gypsy but still you go, why? I think this is an unfulfilled urge/ UN-scratchable itch which is the basis for experience of forward motion of time.





One of the other criteria you mentioned was being British. For one growing up on Belgian late 90's metalcore: the UK scene back then was something that could easily be overlooked. I remember some pale Knuckledust shows, but that must have been it. How that has changed: UKHC seems to be thriving now (for example *N.W.O.B.H.C.* ... great bands, but perhaps not really your cup of tea), there's noteworthy obnoxious blackened punk (Hotchin Pit, Legion Blotan...) and obscure, creative black metal (Auld Ridge, Albionic Hermeticism, Ynkleudherhenavogyon...). Haven't even mentioned the things you're doing. So what has changed? Do you feel somewhat part of a bigger influx of heavy, creative UK underground music?

I was semi-involved with the hardcore scene but quietly had the door closed on me after for being politically incorrect and trying to fight people/ anti-social behaviour. Some of it is really great stuff, the short lived NWOBHC band Die were incredible and had very frenetic shows.

A lot of this scene (like 99% of scenes) are just posers of course, for instance I saw a label that heavily ripped off 80's skinhead "patriotic aesthetic" tell its customers to vote Remain in the Brexit referendum because it would be easier to sell records and for their bands to tour. Another band cynically scrambled to quickly recruit a black member after they got accused of being racists (after heavily leaning into skinhead/football casual style). Point is if you are gonna talk the talk be ready to walk the walk, instead this "hardcore" would instantly try and bend the knee to bourgeois moralism. I just don't think this sort of behavior is "hardcore". I think "softcore" would be a better name for it.

I am friendly with a lot of the UKBM guys you mentioned and actually very proud that I can say that as they are a true counter-culture, most of them are insanely talented (The level of detail the Hotchin Pit goes into with its releases and zines is insane and bands like Auld Ridge and

Ynkleudherhenavogyon legitimately have a level of musicianship that is outstanding. I worked for Legion Blotan back in the day and it taught me everything I know.)

I've never heard Knuckledust, but bands like Broccoli, Dead Inside, Leatherface were my first experiences with UK HC.

Broccoli... Wow, that is not a good name for a band. Also: 'you tried to fight people'

Haha I dunno mate I like it! Also eating Broccoli is good for you.

Re "trying to fight people": I don't know where you are at in life, but when you become privy to certain facts about "how the world is" as opposed to "how you want the world to be is" there is a good chance you might become angry, aggressive, with a deep feeling of being cheated and lied to. Unfortunately these nasty feelings can be expressed in anti-social and violent behavior. Also I would say that this is not some "hard man" bullshit, I will hold my hands up to and never dispute the fact that I have been a horrible cunt over the years and alienated people but at the same time if I have a problem with someone I go directly to them to sort it man to man and do not like some feminized gossipy nu-male bitch. I found out the hard way that most "men" do not operate like this.

That reminds me of the flail you made for Occulted Death Stance. I think it was on IG that you were willing to give it away to a person who somehow outdid him/herself by overcoming personal fears, or who'd just fight you for it. I don't know if it was a joke, but it's certainly a better criterium then a random name pick out of a bunch of "people who shared the post". Did you end up giving it away in the end (and what did that person do)? Do you somehow wanted to help people with that challenge; I mean, there's not much in it for you and it seemed like a lot of work went into that flail.

Everything is a joke, but a very serious joke. Have you ever watched The Sopranos? There is an episode where Tony Soprano is feeling very weak and insecure so decides to beat the shit out of his new goon who is the most muscular and intimidating looking. It was sort of like this, I wanted to force myself to walk into the woods at night where the strange noises are and become the terror that haunts me. Another example is maybe sticking your arm into the crevice of a tree in the Amazon jungle, not knowing what horrors lurk inside.

If you get what I am saying I was expecting/hoping/fearing that it would act as some lure for some fucking psycho to come out of the woodwork and make me fight for my life. Ironically the only person who seriously wants to set up a fight is a girl,

so it puts me in a bind as they are definitely embodying the spirit of "overcoming" trying to fight me but if I beat fuck out of them I'm a woman beater and if I lose then I am a man that's been beaten by a woman... life is funny like that, still they are going to fucking die.

I didn't want to "help" people in some sort of charity "self-help guru" thing but make the idea of vital fury and violence a possibility in the minds of people who listen to my music. You have to understand it's about the possibility of these things even to happen, most people walk around every day thinking "oh no cant do this, I cant do that" like there are some sort of rules, the music I make is to destroy this slave mentality. So with this in mind there is everything in it for me.

Scum fe
will kill your
unborn child

Scum fe
will kill your
unborn child



Occulted Death Stance : *Some Things Are Eternal* tape.

Reoccurring theme in ODS is the cycle of birth and death and how they are two sides of a coin. For anyone reading: the tape came with a condom filled full of soil I took from a local grave. My father actually walked in on me filling condoms full of dirt and lost his mind. I tried to spread a rumor that I had died also when I released this, problem is no one even knew or cared about the project haha.

Occulted Death Stance : *Feathered Serpent* tape

I came across a box of wooden spikes and thought "hmm what can I do with these?", originally I was going to attach them to this big block of wood and then that to a chain to make a sort of medieval booby trap. But then when I did *Feathered Serpent* which has the theme of "drawing down" powerful spirits and gods to manifest power in this realm I decided I wanted to make something that looks like it has come from "somewhere else". You know I mentioned "chasing the dragon" in terms of music as experience before, so it was a way of trying to shift the pathways in peoples brains; make peoples thoughts go in a new direction.

Less remarkable at first sight is perhaps the Beowulf tape. Then I came to understand that it's an audio book adaptation of Beowulf: the fact that an early medieval text found its way to a contemporary label like A.S.K.E. is curious, no? I actually read that poem quite some time ago as well. Are you familiar with the work of Stewart Home by the way? It might be the improbability of the Beowulf adaptation, but things like that somehow reminded me of his output.

Well it didn't feel curious to me as A.S.K.E. has always been about taking elements from the past and tradition and weaponising them in a futurist/modernist way (maybe this is what that *Archeo-Futurism* book is about, I've never actually read it). I have never heard of Stewart Home. I just looked now, he did alot on AK press which was a cool Scottish anarchist publisher. It upsets me to find out he did a prank phone call album with prostitutes, I thought I was a trailblazer phoning up sex lines and playing harsh noise to them!

In a Boothaeven interview with Blinding Sun (BH7) A.S.K.E. was mentioned as a prime example of a label that puts forth the most elaborate artwork: "...even the no-frills releases are thematically sound in subtle ways whether their design mimics a cigarette packet or a football hooligan recruitment flyer..." He's of course right. In general: how important is that aesthetic aspect for you?

I think aesthetics rules everything, you can see the truth to this when people commit crimes. As long as you look cool while you do it the masses will always forgive you and the moralists will have to fight tooth and nail to change the people's opinion. Speak to a small child, they will always root for the handsome guy with big muscles; Osama Bin Laden said "if there is a choice between a strong horse and a weak horse, they will always choose the strong horse." So be wary of anyone who tries to convince you that looks don't matter, these people are liars usually saying this to mask some deficiency. Why should anyone care about anything that doesn't look good?

Some of A.S.K.E.'s "more-frills" releases border on the aspect of the artistic multiple. Can we look into a few of them? Could you elaborate on the concept/background ideas/inspiration...

Gargovle : *The Disintegration Project* tape.

Haha, as if you know about this? This is one of the first tapes I did. I was trying to replicate the xeroxed aesthetic but musically. So using the last dubbedtake to make the next one and so on, problem is the signal gets weaker as you do this so I had to find a way to boost it and make it more blown out each time.

KNEEL BEFORE HIS MAJESTY

I would boil down any core concept around this:

Higher truths can sit as contradictions.

Aesthetics over Ethics.

Stasis is God, change is Satanic.

Symbols over words, doing over thinking.

Myth is more real than history.

Man, these statements beg for a deep dive, but I'll respect your opinion and refrain from going into philosophy any further. Yet, regarding "the aesthetics over esthetics" line, can you give us some visual elements that speak to you (as an artist)? Even though there's quite a bit of Black Metal on A.S.K.E., we don't see the typical corpse paint stuff. Bored by that?

I'm not bored by it it's just not my thing and other people do it much better than what I could do.

Visual things that speak to me:

"Emergent" aesthetics. There is a dude called Martin Kellet who is the master of this. So you know stuff that wasn't made with the intention of cool aesthetics but just has anyway.

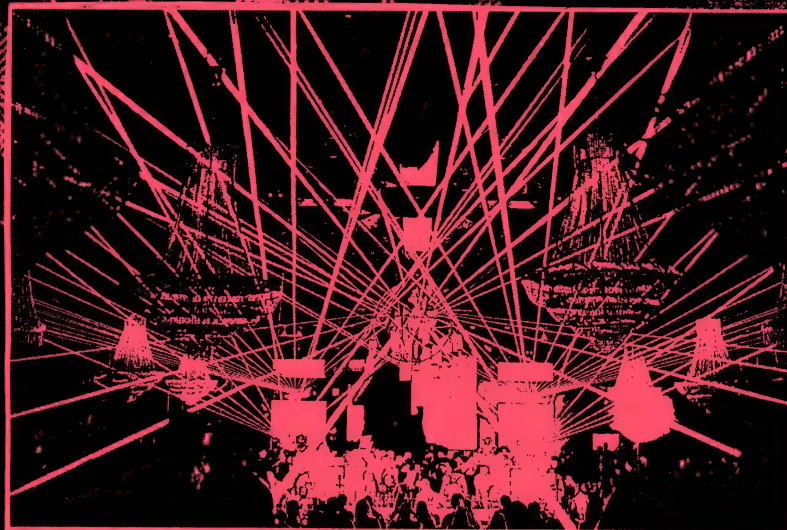
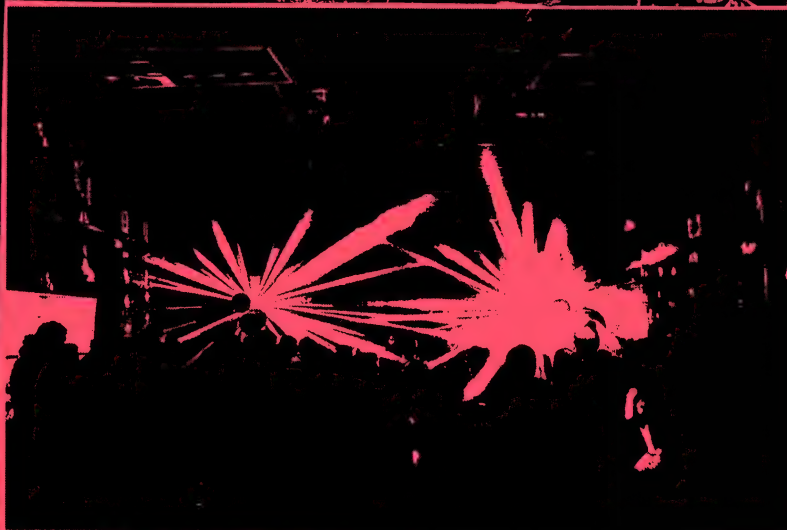
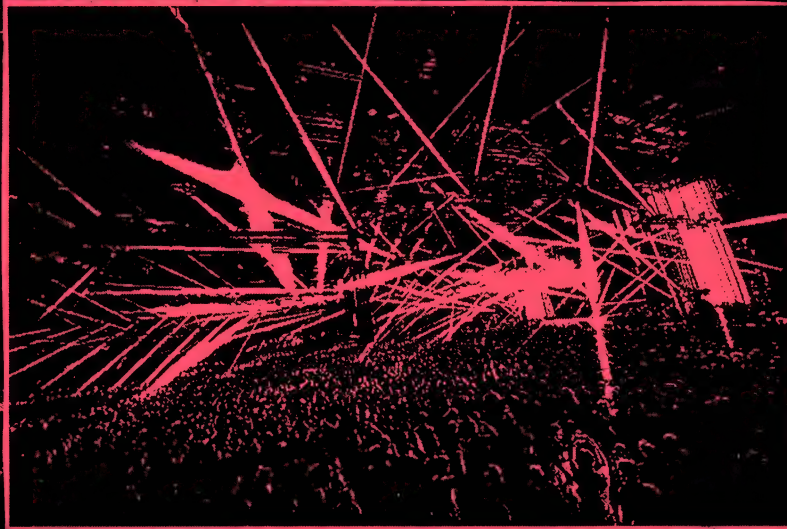
I like the idea of the format itself being part of the aesthetic, i.e. I like flyers that you want to collect or an advertisement that is a stand-alone "work" in itself. I think director Guy Ritchie (who did *Snatch* and *The Gentlemen*, great films) summed it up when talking about the films of Sam

Peckinpah that "the film itself was a character in the story".

Late medieval / renaissance paintings, football hooliganism, ultras, oldschool tracksuits, skinhead zines, insane tifos (Legio Warsaw vs. Leicester City "Kneel before his majesty".... just fucking genius, eternal respect), medieval weaponry, women with sublime beauty, Runes, Japanese Cars, war, gore, gargoyles, bdsm, cathedrals,...

So you mentioned the Occulted Death Stance release *Feathered Serpent* has the theme of "drawing down powerful spirits and gods to manifest power in this realm." That sounds very Nietzschean. You also mentioned the idea of the cycle of birth and death; depending on your focus this could as well be Nietzschean (idea of an "eternal return") or rather Heidegger-ish (the idea of true and authentic living requiring the prospect of death). Are you inspired by philosophy and if so, what are philosophical concepts that speak to you? If you rather return to the harsh noise, that's fine by me as well.

Oh I'm not sure I think it might be more Nietzschean to say "there are no spirits above and you must master, you're the physical realm through your will to power". Yes Eternal Return is a direct influence and name of an ODS tape. Yes I have read a little philosophy and it's definitely an influence however I try to avoid getting too nerdy about it, I think when you start getting too philosophical it's really weak and pathetic, I want to bully these sort of people.



By the way, something I still wanted to ask, earlier this year you re-released an EP of your OI/HC band Copper via A.S.K.E. Is that project still active, or was it just a matter of demand for the EP? Does that mean we can expect vinyl from A.S.K.E. in the future?

Fuck knows man.

OK, let's end this interview with some (semi)random bits. Could you please comment on them (whatever comes to mind)?

"What do I think about Dead in Mayhem? Well, what can you possibly say about someone who can starve himself to death for days, just to see how his body will look like? I've always wanted someone like that in my band" (Euronymous, 1988)

Blowing his brains out was probably the most interesting thing he did. Live at Leipzig best Mayhem after Deathcrush.

"We're all one traumatic event away from the worst day of your life being reduced to your neighbor's favorite binge show." A certain Eric Perry on the Netflix Dahmer series.

I read this twice and I don't know/understand.

"As hilarious as it is to see certain projects making professional quality self-promotional clips pretending to be vampires on Instagram or making action figures of themselves and covid masks - it must stop, it's fucking toy behaviour." (Kasturn interview, The Black Book zine, three)

Imagine actually wearing one of those gay masks haha. Kasturn good band.

In 1995, Eric Cantona sparked furious debate as to his meaning when he appeared at a press conference after he won his appeal against a prison sentence for his kung-fu kick on an abusive Crystal Palace fan at Selhurst Park to say just one line: "When the seagulls follow the trawler, it's because they think sardines will be thrown into the sea."

Aristocrat of the soul. That fan should be honored and humbled he had any physical contact with this man.

"Live, Laugh, Love. I mean it." (Крюкокрест interview, The Black Book zine three)

It's literally a choice how you take it and you can't cry for them all, so why cry at all? Die laughing.







The Specter

"less exposure and more darkness"

Foremost I should express the importance of Dungeon Grease zine for Boothaven's Magazine: your take on a familiar aesthetic approach as well as the way your personality resonates through the pages, was very influential. Although it's fairly easy to make a zine, there just aren't many that can interest me the way DG did. How do you look back at these issues? To be honest, I'm not convinced that a medium as a printed zine still has its merits within the current music scene, apart maybe from being a nostalgic novelty. Yet, the fact that Zwartkunst Smederij communicates with its followers via a printed newsletter does help holding onto the practice somewhat longer.


Thanks a lot for your words, that means a lot. I disagree with your remark there simply because printed underground zines are one of the few places where one can truly speak their mind. Online interviews are available to anyone, for everyone, which is not necessarily a good thing. As we all know, things can and will be used against you if it's on the internet. Apart from that I think if a zine is done well with proper layout, custom artwork and a good selection of artists it can still draw the reader into a special place without all the distractions of web browsers and other technological interference.

The reason I started the newsletter is because I like to make printed media. When done well I think it still has value. I like the idea of stuff just existing on paper and not online. With everything so easily accessible I want to offer something extra to those who order from the label. The response on the newsletter has been great so far so I think people are appreciating this small gesture.

OK, let's open the interview up with a question I lifted from the Zwartkunst Smederij newsletter: "Do you think Black Metal should be restricted in sound at all?"

Absolutely not. But it should have the "right feeling" and intention for me. I don't want to go in too much in what that means from my perspective, it's not important.

I believe you agree that BM might be anti-religious, yet remains spiritual in essence. Especially the latter seems to be true for the majority of the projects you are involved with. Furthermore I came to understand that we shouldn't interpret your music as a form of escapism. Can I therefore deduce that spirituality plays a significant role in your life (as an artist)?



Spirituality is definitely a large part of my life. It's what guides me in a world that keeps making less sense day after day. Artistic and personal life are so intertwined that it's impossible to disconnect the two. I'm busy with creating art and music all the time so the spiritual aspect is always there.

The themes that are used in projects or bands that I'm a part of are metaphors for personal matters or events that have occurred in 'real' life. In that sense I do not consider my own work as escapism since it was never based in mere fantasy or dream worlds. I do not seek to escape, I try to transform and learn through creating music and art.

So how does a form of spirituality manifests itself in your life then? What are specific forms of spirituality that you seek out?

I don't really seek out any knowledge in particular regarding this topic. A lot of spiritual teachings or currents don't resonate at all with me since it's too dogmatic and requires deep study to really make sense of it all. I'm not interested in that. The mind is capable of seeing beyond what we conceive with our own eyes, and even shape reality according to one's will. I tend to believe that there's a world beyond the material one we currently manifest. In fact, I have experienced it multiple times. This is what inspires me and gives me a reason to create. Cultivating the vision to build your own worlds and give it form so it can manifest in our earthly reality.

In an interview with Addergebroed you mentioned the following: "BM gradually loses its traditions and values, or has already lost them. To some extent this could be something positive: ancient and essential aspects of the genre can adopt a new and relevant meaning". Can you elaborate on this? What are aspects of the genre that are now less significant or applied in a different way?

"Back in the days" there was a lot of mystery surrounding the bands playing this style of music. The emphasis laid on being unique; in sound, songwriting and imagery. In my opinion that attitude has been lost today. Everything looks and sounds the same. There are some exceptions as always but I've really become disinterested in the whole thing because of these reasons. But the most important thing is probably the mystery. This is one of the aspects I try to "guard" as much as possible with my own work. Since everything is so in the open these days I think the genre could benefit from less exposure and more darkness, so to speak.

The aspect of mystery seems to be very difficult to pursue this day and age. However, in my opinion, when done right, an element of mystery will always be inherent to BM; it's not something you need to add to it as a form of seasoning so to say. Especially not by promoting a clichéd, artificial underground aesthetic on every possible medium, or stressing the limitation of your band's output, nor uttering simplistic provocations... Can you recall the last time you've been struck by a form of mystery via a band?

Not really, but that's mainly because I kind of feel lukewarm to what is happening in the underground today. I still keep track of some things but rarely is there something that resonates with me. In the past it was easier to keep yourself uninformed, whether you wanted to or not. I guess I prefer it that way. The less you know sometimes, the better. There's still plenty of old stuff out there to discover that shares these aspects and the amount is enough to last a lifetime.



Is there a record outside the usual canon that can serve as an example? After all, zines can be an ideal instrument to discover new music.

I'm not sure what you mean with "the usual canon"? One of the best modern black metal records for me is *Harps of the Ancient Temples* by Nocternity. Amazing sound and musically everything that I like about this genre. Sadly, hardly anyone talks about this band or this record. A shame really, his older and newer stuff blows a ton of hyped-up stuff right out of the water. Nocternity definitely deserves more credit for their dedication to this kind of sound and imagery.

It's not a rare thing to hear black metal musicians utter that they aren't interested in the live aspect of this type of music. It's difficult to generalize the statement, but I agree that it seems to be difficult to transcend the atmosphere of an album in a live setting, especially when performed in a typical metal venue with pro-light/sound assistance. After all: the theatrical aspect doesn't need much to make it corny... What's your opinion about this topic, and how do you actualize it with the bands you're active in?

It depends on how you look at it. I agree with the statement that it is difficult to transcend the atmosphere of an album in a live setting. But it is possible if the circumstances are correct. Are people really expecting an obscure or evil atmosphere by watching a band play on a big stage in front of a couple of thousand people? It's simply not going to happen. So you need to make it more intimate.

The few shows we did with Vaal were successful in my opinion due to the circumstances being right at the time. No big stages or crowds, a certain amount of manicism from the people attending and a great energy overall.

I personally do not mind the theatrics, how ridiculous they might seem to be at times. I wish bands would use more over the top aesthetic in Black Metal instead of pretending they are a serious band by wearing jeans and hoodies on stage. This music is about shedding your humanity and not just about "the riffs", like many are claiming these days.

In fact, I was there when you played with Vaal for the first time. It was curious to witness Warloghe going for an anti-show by performing completely motionless at the one hand, and Vaal being wild and uncontrollable on the other hand. Both adequate, but the latter being rather a-typical for modern BM bands. I definitely appreciated that sort of punk-ish energy. Is there a cathartic aspect to a Vaal life show? How would you ideally experience a BM show both as an artist and a spectator?

I'm glad that you appreciated the wilder performance. When you look at older bands in their prime (even from other styles) like Deicide, Gorgoroth, Immortal, Slayer ... there's a lot of energy and movement going on, but not at the cost of atmosphere. The dynamite and urgency is missing in Black Metal shows sometimes and I always enjoy it when bands are more over the top. Static performance has its place of course.

Warloghe was a great example of an original approach and imposing presence that really felt evil and crushing.

If I'm not mistaken you used to be, or still are, part of the live line-up of Invunche. A band that most certainly has a hardcore punk edge to it; not only sound wise, but also when it comes to the musical background of some of the people involved (at least in the live setting). How do you experience that? Do you feel somewhat connected to the HC/punk scene as well?

Me and Invunche go way back, probably 15 years already. We started out in our first real band which was grind / fastcore and we kept playing in bands ever since. I'm a big fan of Japanese hardcore which was an obsession for a very long time. Some of my all-time favorite bands in general all come from that country. My roots when it comes to making music are all based in punk and hardcore. I still have a warm heart for that music although it has not been such a big part of my life as it was many years ago.

Let's look into some bands/projects you're involved with. We already mentioned Vaal. The latest release *Het Vagevuur* is a more stripped-down and harsher sound than what we could hear on *Visioen van het Verborgene Land*. What was the idea or incentive behind this turn?

There was never a real direction determined for Vaal other than to bring tribute to one of my favorite styles of music which is Norwegian Black Metal. The first demo's and LP were pretty crude and I honestly had no real idea of what I was doing other than having the urge to create hateful and simple Black Metal. *Het Vagevuur* was initially not meant to be the last recording of the project. The title reflects how I felt back



then about everything. It was like being stuck in purgatory, not sure what to do next and if I should kill the project or not. Eventually the right decision was to do this last recording and then bury Vaal forever.

It's a pity to hear that Vaal is no longer active. So, is that where Fir comes in then: a continuation of expressing yourself through Black Metal, yet dropping all Vaal connotations and narratives? In what way does Fir signal your perception and understanding of Black Metal?

I came to the conclusion that I wanted to start anew, without all the negative connotations, and move on to better things. I guess controversy surrounding my projects and personal downfall had to happen before I could move towards the level I'm at right now. This has all been important for me to understand myself and the topics and ideas I work with. I try to work harder and more intensively on things than before. And, most of all, not influenced by mundane outside factors. Fir is the vessel to channel these renewed energies into.

Quit recently there was the resurgence of Blood Tyrant; a project you share with Morden Demstervold. What was the main reason for putting that band on hold, and what have been the changes that affectuated its return? Also how does Tirgûl fit in this picture?

It was mostly my decision to put the band on hold. The reasons were mostly the same as I described in the previous answer. Blood Tyrant was born out of a certain mindset and idea and I needed to get out of that headspace. That's when we talked about Tirgûl, a new direction for the both of us. With doing that project we eventually returned to the essence of the world we have been trying to build throughout the years. At some point Blood Tyrant came into the picture again and we talked about doing another recording. It felt like the right thing to do since it's where everything started for us. We are now focusing on more material as we speak.

Another project of yours, Old Tower, transitioned from dark ambient to dungeon synth and back (I know I simplified it here). Outside of the confined dungeon synth/dark ambient spectrum, there's a broad landscape of interesting minimalist and experimental music; are you looking into that direction more often these days? In comparison the larger part of today's DS projects struck me as excelling in mediocrity...

I was already listening to lots of ambient music before I even discovered "dungeon synth". Ambient music has always been my main inspiration for Old Tower. Artists like Steve Roach, Robert Rich, Alio Die, Lustmord and others have been in constant rotation here for many, many years. I never considered Old Tower a full-on dungeon synth project limited to just that genre. I guess many people were disappointed in the last album but to me it's the most honest and true version of the project so far. It's where I come from and what I like to listen to myself.



In the Forgotten Kingdoms interview you did for Dungeon Grease zine (issue four), I felt an optimism by both you and Azgorh towards the resurgence of the Dungeon Synth genre. Your answer above suggests that this feeling is no longer present...

It was something fresh and exciting. There was still a lot to explore too. I can still get excited about newer releases for sure. But most of the stuff that is coming out and being praised is not something I'm looking for.

What are elements you deem necessary for the music that you bring forth with Old Tower? And out of curiosity: do you make use of self-captured field recordings?

Inspiration, first and foremost. I don't have a strict set of rules or elements that I use to be able to create. They always change but inspiration is the main and constant source I need to be able to create.

Some field recordings are made by myself, some are made by others. It just depends on what I need at that moment.

What can in fact inspire you, and do you draw on the same sources for your electronic music, your black metal projects and even your visual art? Has this been the case from the beginning on, or do you see an evolution in what you absorb as well?

Yes and no. The foundations have always been the same; fantastic stories and worlds, death, darkness and nature. However, in the period around 2017 - 2018 I was mostly driven by hatred that was probably fueled by a deep depression, which at that point pushed me even further down the drain. That period of my creative outlet is something I don't stand behind anymore. Considering how I am in life at the moment I really don't recognize myself in those works. But being possessed and devoted to this music and lifestyle you take risks and you don't always think about the consequences. I've taken my distance from the things I did and said back then and it hopefully shows in my music and artwork. That's what I try, at least. So yes, there's definitely been an evolution in inspiration. I try to focus more on what is really me and not what I think should be me, if that makes sense.

Let's end this with an early mission statement regarding the Shadow Kingdom: "The Shadow Kingdom is dedicated to creating and spreading obscure and mystic music in the range of dark ambient and dungeon synth. With an absolute focus on introspective experiences and building audial and visual worlds, the Shadow Kingdom takes shape, independent of formats." So, don't know exactly how many years later, where 're we at? What has changed, what still needs to be explored?

Not much has changed in that regard. The only thing is that we changed the name to Skyggeraich. There's still a lot for us out there to explore and dive into. We're currently focusing on new ideas and concepts that will see the light of day sometime in the future. The work never ends and we'll continue to expand the murky realm we carefully built throughout the years.





Discussing eight songs with Pede from Belgian black metal band Alkerdeel

So why exactly do you read a zine like this? Maybe you don't shy away from a bit of rambling about this silly music thing of ours? In that case I've got you covered: the following text is basically me picking Alkerdeel's singer Pede's brain about a dozen of songs. Simple comme bonjour.

Let's start with a familiar one. Earlier this year I could pick some tunes for an episode of the Wangedrag radio show and I thought of selecting an Alkerdeel track. I intended to go for songs that didn't cross the 3 minute mark and thus there was only one Alkerdeel song that could have made the cut, and to be really honest, I don't think it's the band's strongest moment...

Alkerdeel *Horsesaw* (Morinde, 2012)

That's one of the songs that is most influenced by Celtic Frost. I hardly recall our mindset when we composed the song however. We never have specific intentions while composing a song, especially not regarding the length. *Horsesaw* is not a counterweight for *Du Levande*, which takes 20 minutes. Think we didn't have anything more to add. Simple as that.

That makes sense; *Morbid Tales* for example never really clicked with me either. I can hear how it echoes in a lot of BM, but it might just be "too metal" sounding for me... Anyway, you mentioned Alkerdeel doesn't set off from a blueprint when composing music. So, is it rather in hindsight then that you conclude something like "OK, this turned out to be our Celtic Frost"-song?

Yeah, it's mostly in hindsight - but not necessarily after the song is finished. We mostly call a riff after a band, or an object that reminds of that riff. Just to remember the different parts. We're using these composing sheets to remember the different sections of a song, and those read as a track list. The opening riff of *Regardez ses yeux III* was at first less death metal, and we said: "it should be more Necros Christos" or there's this atmospheric part on *Trok* that we call "the Ancient" section. But we never start composing with a band in mind, say, "let's make a Celtic Frost song."

"You have nothing in common with me. You think old-school is 1993. Ha! I've been a thrasher since '84. And almost nothing sounds true anymore."

Darkthrone *Raised on Rock* (F.O.A.D., 2007)

It's no secret that Darkthrone is one of the black metal bands I hold in highest regard. It was the first black metal band I ever heard, back in '94, and they've been an inspiration since. These days people argue if you can still call them black metal. They have been through a death metal phase over black to crust/punk and heavy metal. These days there's a bit more doom involved. To me it's irrelevant whether they're still "black

metal" or not. A band like Monumentum from Italy or Aghast from Norway hardly sounds like anything what a young teenager these days would call black metal, but back in the days, it was all under the same umbrella. Some people refer to the sound, others to the ideology. Ideology aside, black metal is to many people limited to the Norsecore sound of the early nineties, hence "You think old-school is 1993", but then, listen to Absu from the US, Beherit or Impaled Nazarene from Finland, Necromantia, Varathron and Rotting Christ from Greece, Mortuary Drape from Italy or Samael and Alastis from Switzerland. All from the same period, but another area and another sound and equally black metal. Nocturno Culto isn't even referring to these bands. From interviews with him it shows that he has no interest in contemporary black metal at all, and sticks with bands like Merciful Fate, Manilla Road, Cirith Ungol and such. So his definition of true metal is totally different than what people would think of such a legendary black metal musician. That said, read some of the comments of T.T. (Abigor) online, who's holding a totally different angle.

I followed your suggestion and read some interviews with T.T. I'll quote from one with Invisible Orange (2014): "We are black metal, and we are pure black metal, and I tell you once and for all, we are traditional black metal, because the tradition and origin of this music was always highly individual. It was rebellious and fresh and unheard of before, and there were never limits in those old days. The copycats are a relatively new and modern phenomenon. Mayhem, Burzum, Darkthrone, Rotting Christ, Mystifier, Thorns, Abruptum, Dissection, Von, Unholy, Necromantia, Master's Hammer, Sigh, Beherit, Samael, Emperor and so on-you just needed 10 seconds to identify a band, so strong was the individuality of each group! The imitators have understood nothing of the "tradition" and the old days of black metal!"

I don't know why it's so important for a band to be "traditional" or "real" anyway. Especially in BM this seems to be a recurring theme...

Actually, I for once quite relate to what he's saying in the interview you quote, mostly I frown with his way of gatekeeping: you should read his social media posts where he acts like the ultimate boomer troll. But! Norwegian black metal was in some way a reaction to the run-of-the-mill death metal bands from that time. That's why you had this anti Scott Burns / Morrisound tag on all those early black metal releases: "no mosh, no core, no trends, no fun". It was a primal point back in the day, to be unique, and that's why there are so many classic releases. No band sounded like another. There's so many views that could define black metal, and where "being satanic" is often cited as the basic one, to me, "being unique" is as relevant. It's as important as olive oil in the Italian kitchen.



Let's broaden the scope a bit and listen to an iconic song out of the European free jazz tradition; very much a product of the '68 zeitgeist, but fitting for this day and age as well:

Peter Brötzmann Octet

Machine Gun (Machine Gun, 1968)

In the early 2000s I had a far greater interest in this kind of music, probably because I was studying at the art school and had many friends with different tastes of music. Some of them, grindcore freaks, were also into free-jazz, which isn't that weird, think of Naked City. I also remember stating on MySpace that Alkerdeel was influenced by Darkthrone, Merzbow and Autechre, haha. These days I hardly listen to this kind of music. I approve it merits, but it foremost makes me nervous. Too many impulses. If it's not metal, I prefer "beautiful" music, whatever that can be.

It's weird though: I saw Peter Brötzmann perform a few times, but he always played in renowned concert halls, so there were a lot of "classy" people in the audience, mainly of somewhat older age, all dressed up in fancy couture, only to then witness the Brötzmann bring forth this abrasive wall of shrieks and peeps. Same goes for that time Keiji Haino played Bozar. You ever had that on your shows: walking around before the gig, seeing certain folks and thinking "man you is not going to like our shtick"?

And also, was Alkerdeel in fact inspired by Merzbow at some point, or just electronics in general?

Especially in the early days, we played more "alternative events" than actual metal shows, think Kraak fest, Incubate, Impakt fest etc. Although we don't care who listens to our music, there has been a moment in time we decided to focus more on metal events. I remember an invitation to play in Aalst at Netwerk, to play in a cube or next to a swimming pool of some art exhibition. To some extent it was fun, but at the same time it didn't feel right. Sometimes it felt like being a monkey next to barrel organ. Do your trick and make us smile.

Regarding electronics; Merzbow was the namedrop. It was electronics in general. We started out as a jam band, which made more options possible. I was using this memory man delay pedal to manipulate my voice, as you can hear on *Du Levande*. But not only I became utterly annoyed by technical problems during shows (and sitting on my knees during shows), the band evolved into another direction. We expressed the direction the band should go into sound wise only once, and that's when we started out: a mix between Darkthrone, Burning Witch, Ildjarn and Merzbow. It was a good starting point, but during the years we evolved away from that. But we still refer to electronic music when composing. I remember some bass loops QW produced, and we thought "hey, if you can make that sound like an oscillation, rather than a regular bass line, it might work better". And it did.

OK, back to metal. Way back... One from the formative years of extreme metal:

Necrophagia

Chainsaw Lust (Rise From the Crypt 1984)

Necrophagia is one of the oldest black/death bands around, but honestly, I've never been really into them. The *Cannibal Holocaust* song (with Phil Anselmo) however, has the most amazing opening riffs ever! Check the clip online! A true banger! There's also a bit of the change of the millennium Moonfog atmosphere in it - could have been a song from Eibon also, the project of Fenris, Satyr, Anselmo, Maniac & Killjoy, that never saw the light of day. Headmeat, the death metal band, wherein Pui and Nieke played before starting Alkerdeel, was signed to Baphomet Records - the label ran by Killjoy of Necrophagia.

Yeah, pretty sure I saw Headmeat once opening for Inhum. Didn't know they were signed by Killjoy; something to add to your resume. Funny you mentioned that videoclip though. Ever since someone lent me that Necrophagia Through The Eyes Of The Dead VHS, I've considered the band something like a musical fruition of cult-B-Horror-movies. Definitely, the type of VHS you wanted to hide from your parents.

By the way: the song I picked here was reworked by Mayhem and resulted in the Chainsaw Gutsfuck track on the Deathcrush EP. Later on, Necrophagia re-recorded their Chainsaw Lust song for that Cannibal Holocaust EP you've mentioned, but they added parts from the Mayhem rendition as a tribute to Euronymous. Oh, the frivolity!

Aha! Didn't know that, apart from Maniac being a huge Necrophagia fan!

Next-up: La Monte Young. In an online article on The Fader a 79-year old La Monte Young gives general advice to musicians. One of his recommendations was to "not be afraid of confusing people" and he illustrates this as follows:

"How many people have seen my 1960 compositions? In these compositions, I wrote very conceptual narratives-for example, in one composition, we built a fire in front of the audience and let the audience watch it and listen to it. And in another composition, we turned a group of butterflies loose in the audience. Later on,

one group of performers recorded it with microphones, recorded the butterflies' wings. [...] In 1960 #6, I invited the audience to come on stage, and let the performers come into the audience and watch the audience."

La Monte Young

The Second Dream of the High-Tension Line
Stepdown Transformer (1962)

Probably sounding like barbarian, but never listened to La Monte Young, and only know the name by hearing. As said in a previous question, my interest in experimental music is limited to a specific time. Not saying I'm not open to it, but there's so much more that touches me deeper that I never took the time to delve into La Monte Young. I could tell a lot more about a seventies children movie soundtrack like Dunderklumpen, than what's generally be regarded as important in musical history. Also, I'm very hesitant towards artists that need to write down manifests, like Liturgy for example. I understand the need from a scientific point of view, but that's not my position in music. Anyway, in interviews we've stated before that we wanted to confuse people and although we probably do some musical adventuring that sounds weird to some, it's not about shocking as it's never that weird to ourselves at all, rather obvious. Mixing crust and doom is not confusing. It's about trying to find your own voice based upon the broad scale of music you personally like. On the other hand, we like to confuse with our imagery and concepts. If some newbie in the genre thinks (black) metal is limited to what can be found on Order Of The Black Arts, then I totally understand his difficulties with Alkerdeel.

OK, Jeroen, now I got to ask: what is there to be said about Dunderklumpen? Also: since you mentioned the Alkerdeel imagery and concepts; it almost feels like they're in fact closer to Dunderklumpen, than, say, De Mysteriis...

Totally right. I have absolutely zero interest (anymore) in the so-called orthodox dogmatics for black metal. The older I get, the less. The general "Northern" atmosphere of those Scandinavian bands always attracted me more than the religious aspect. I have some very nostalgic/romantic memories regarding mysterious cartoons I saw when being a kid, such as Dunderklumpen or Jan Zonder Vrees. You can find some footage on YouTube, try finding Jätten Jorm - about a mountain that likes to bathe in a lake. When listening to many of the works of Wagner Odegard/Wulkanaz or Arckanum, I get a similar feeling. Odegard's artworks, wherein he combines Swedish Folklorism and Asian elements are far more interesting than again a goat on some altar. The music of Dunderklumpen is composed by Toots Thielemans by the way - which makes the off-key singing quite weird. But it works. No Disney cheesiness here.



Some more off-key singing: "La La La La La..."

Morbid Disgusting Semla (December Moon, 1987)

Haha, I always thought the Mayhem outro "All the little flowers are singing" was also Dead's idea, but that was before his time. Could have been his with this "La la la la". Morbid is a prime example of a black metal band that is musically linked more to thrash metal. Same with Merciless, Mefisto, old Kreator ...

There must have been a Belgian connection to Morbid though since a lot of their releases were released via Reaper Records (from Westerlo out of all places).

Wow, Reaper Records, that's long ago! I didn't know they did a release for Morbid, but I do remember the *Ripping Evil 7"* by Sathanas. Don't know if you're familiar with Mindview magazine, which used to be like a free paper back in the days, before turning into a more or less regular magazine.

Ha, yes, definitely... I frequented the nearby Free Record Shop only to score that magazine.

Morbid Geert, who still writes for Rock Tribune, was one of the regular writers about extreme metal for Mindview and he did a special once, must have been in the early nineties, which was like the jump for many to delve into this type of music. Sathanas and Impaled Nazerene were featured in it, if I recall that right. I wonder if Reaper had something to do with Uncle Underground or Wim Baelus (another famous writer), which were from the same area if I'm right.

That's the que to delve deeper into a bit of Black Metal uit den ouden Belgischen doos:

Iconoclasm Marching Evil (Marching Evil, 2000)

I remember Iconoclasm back from the day, but never enjoyed it. This is more the Marduk-influenced kind of BM, and although I do like some older Marduk records, my interest lies elsewhere. From that period, and even way older, I do like the first two Ancient Rites records, Lugubrum above all and the first Enthroned. That's it.

I stumbled upon Iconoclasm mainly because their album was released via the hardcore/metalcore label GoodLife recordings; a strange combination.

Yes, Goodlife. Metalcore never clicked with me. I always thought they totally missed it, mixing extreme metal with hardcore. Sheer Terror did a far better job with, again, Celtic Frost. Also Converge had some very good moments though, but H8000 metalcore, nah. Some very nice people involved in that scene though - and I have to admit - we were regulars at Pyrrhus Records in Ghent. They had a very good selection of extreme metal, the owner Bruno was a very nice bloke and we still speak to this day.

Hardly listenable, not particularly enjoyable, but I thought I might throw it in anyway. Probably Belgian as well.

Per & Oystein Evil Noise II tape (2005)

Funeral Folk are typical hipster shit. Ok, they released our demo, but jamming on an ukulele for an hour and giving it a name after a Katharsis song is something my grannie can do as well. The only project worth listening to that comes from that area is Good Shape.

Well, now that surprises me: I really thought these "funeral folks" were in fact from your entourage (so to say): the Alkerdeel demo, "the Flemish connection", the references to the Scandinavian second wave, the DIY aesthetics, the rural yet artsy character ... It was all there, but I stand corrected. Sylvester Anfang had some pretty cool releases ... Anyway, when I contacted you for this thing, you referred to a "black metal and trains"-band or song. Obviously, I'm intrigued to find out about this...

Damn, busted. I should have known you'd ask additional questions. It was a joke. I love these dudes by heart. They prefer to remain unknown, while I could reveal many interesting insights, but they don't like that. So it was easier to corner them as a bunch of hipsters, haha.

When you invited me I thought I had to come up with music myself, and as there's so many to choose from, some topics would have been helpful. I did an autumn related playlist before, and wasn't into repeating that one. Old trains also have something melancholic that reminds me of this period of the year - it was a bit impulsive cause I'm actually stuck after one! But a very good one: Solefald's *The Linear Scaffold*, which would be the perfect soundtrack for a 19th century autumnal train ride through Eastern Europe. Their vocalist is a poet, and it shows. The song is called *Countryside Bohemians*.

"The train left westwards on a Saturday
sunrise We rode along the linear scaffold To
a fertile sidetrack Not yet been tamed By
urban architecture Unknown in a rural
village Trespassing silent roads Deserted by
television natives Rows of rusty tractors
left behind To keep the sunset company We
strived the valley sides Reached the bright
blue castle It appeared in defiant solitude
Spreading scraps of paint Out on the October
sky surface From inside a giant panorama Our
conversation evolved To women and witches
and sex We ate the saucy beef And dark
Rumanian red Before nightfall dragged us
into its coat To watch to circular star belt
Wrapping us tightly together In the pale
flame of the paraffin lamp A blue rope
lowered onto glowing necks We entered the
circle of branches spread out Like
countryside bohemians Reeking of whiskey and
wool The knife cut from grey to red A
brotherhood of blood Dripping down on the
heather And into the soil We were mystics
balancing On the plunge of knowledge Ready
to fall in ecstasy Of retire smart stupidity
After a one-night stand With anima mundi"

October 19th-26th 1976



SEXUAL TRANSGRESSIONS NO. 5

PROSTITUTION

COUM Transmissions:- Founded 1969. Members (active) Oct 76 - P. Christopherson, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Genesis P-Orridge. Studio in London. Had a kind of manifesto in July/August Studio International 1976. Performed their works in Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris; Galleria Borgogna, Milan; A.I.R. Gallery, London; and took part in Arte Inglese Oggi, Milan survey of British Art in 1976. November/December 1976 they perform in Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art; Deson Gallery, Chicago; N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago and in Canada. This exhibition was prompted as a comment on survival in Britain, and themselves.

2 years have passed since the above photo of Cosey in a magazine inspired this exhibition. Cosey has appeared in 40 magazines now as a deliberate policy. All of these framed form the core of this exhibition. Different ways of seeing and using Cosey with her consent, produced by people unaware of her reasons, as a woman and an artist, for participating. In that sense, pure views. In line with this all the photo documentation shown was taken, unbidden by COUM by people who decided on their own to photograph our actions. How other people saw and recorded us as information. Then there are xeroxes of our press cuttings, media write ups. COUM as raw material. All of them, who are they about and for? The only things here made by COUM are our objects. Things used in actions, intimate (previously private) assemblages made just for us. Everything in the show is for sale at a price, even the people. For us the party on the opening night is the key to our stance, the most important performance. We shall also do a few actions as counterpoint later in the week.

PERFORMANCES: Wed 20th 1pm - Fri 22nd 7pm

Sat 23rd 1pm - Sun 24th 7pm

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سید ابوبکر
الحقانی
مفتی اعظم
پاکستان

Southern Spruce

interview with Abu Bakr
al-Uppsalawi

Even though Slutet was widely considered to be a BM band, the music was oftentimes only bordering on what is generally pigeonholed as BM. Considering how critical you were about BM in the Black Blood interview, it comes to no surprise that Southern Spruce drifts away even further from that genre; both musically and aesthetically. And yet, some touching points still remain... Have you internalized the BM vocabulary in such a way that it comes naturally to express yourself through it?

Yes, indeed. When I do riffs, they just turn out that way, no matter how vitriolic my contempt might be for the lesser cretins of this genre. Black Metal has been my first and foremost musical referential frame since ca 2004 (before that, Iron Maiden & Slayer ruled supreme, and before that, KISS - my trajectory has been quite typical...) and it still is a quite important part of my musical life. The Southern Spruce full-length will showcase a lot of black metal elements and that seems to the members ourselves as a completely natural and typical thing. It always just seems to turn out like that. There will still be a lot of punk, a lot of rock 'n' roll and of course a lot of wacky horns and shit, though. Remember, we never started out playing Black Metal, we ended up playing it. Something just compels us in that direction. But we sincerely have never been part of that culture in any meaningful way. We have never called our music black metal. Slutet nor Southern Spruce.

It's kinda funny when you think of it: as a group of self-proclaimed outsiders you've definitely gained credit within the BM scene. To the point that even songs that hardly sound like BM are labeled as such. Seems like the genre isn't that elitist or exclusive after all. Is there a music culture you feel more closely related to instead? And despite of everything what draws you towards BM after all?

Yes, it is a strange thing, interesting observation. We have never called ourselves black metal in any official or serious capacity. Domsday Rock, The End Music, Outsider Passion Music. Southern Spruce sometimes refers to itself as "100% Authentic Endcommunean Rock Music", and folk music has had at least the same influential impact on Slutet's riffs as any black metal band. But obviously, Slutet, Southern Spruce and the whole Endcommunean thing share a lot of common ground with the black metal music and expression. I have used black metal as a descriptor when describing for example "Love

& Beauty", because that is certainly the closest thing. In modern subculture terminology, I would say that "Love & Beauty" is musically a black metal album, an atmospheric, experimental, dark, introspective, anxious, spastic and passionate blend of black metal. We have never been rather close to BM in any ideological or aesthetic manner, though. Aesthetically we have never been BM.

Ideologically, not really either. With that being said, black metal is, when it is on an elite level, still for me probably the strongest and mightiest form of music. The riffs and the blast beats, the melodicism through raw and dirty guitars, the authenticity and atmosphere... But I still dislike most of it, scoff at a lot of it, and I do rarely anymore take anything seriously on a philosophical or theological/spiritual level. There are powerful exceptions, absolutely, but on the whole, black metal consists of dark music and roleplaying, and that's ok. To conclude, it seems The End Commune has some reach into noise rock, punk, dark ambient, experimental rock, and psychedelic rock and general "naïve art" audiences, but for some reason it is mostly anchored to a black metal audience, and Slutet remains a kind of "contextually and spiritually" black metal band, but the early material honestly sounds nothing like black metal. I would concede though, that on "Jihad" and "Love & Beauty", Slutet plays raw lo-fi experimental psycho black metal, though, so the label is kind of fair, at the end of the day. Southern Spruce, on the other hand, is some kind of raw experimental bm/punk I guess. Whatever. OUTSIDER PASSION MUSIC!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

While browsing the web I stumbled upon the homepage of The End Commune. More often band pages are a bit dull (and come to think about it, they're becoming rare as well), yet the pages for The End Commune filled with random thoughts and insights form an interesting addition to the Commune's musical endeavors. Not unlike your music, the idea of a "search" or "quest" seems to be an underlying common thread.

Shall we go into three topics that appear in your writings:

Firstly, your religious stance. I believe you want to acknowledge the existence of a kind of godlike entity, yet it seems like the completion of that deity isn't really colliding with the modern understanding of it. Also: for one genuinely reflecting on religion and spirituality the run-of-the-mill 'satanism' must be really cringe-worthy...

Religion has been a fundamental focal point since my late teens. Back then of course, I considered myself strongly anti-Christian, but I also intuitively rejected LaVeyan hippie nonsense right from the start. Staunchly anti-Christian, staunchly anti-LaVeyan. Naïve, youthful, stupid days, but also ardent, curious and passionate ones. I thought I had something to say about religion when I was like 18 - wrong. The *humilitas* is not very strong in teenagers, that's for sure. I then experienced a lengthy period of turmoil in the ever-so-lovely snake-pits of value nihilism, skepticism and philosophical pessimism. This was also a period of malnutrition, self-mutilation, drugs, and anxieties of many various kinds. But my spiritual... curiosity, never really faltered. During that time I immersed myself more and more into religious thought, theology and

MAKE
PERIOD
GREAT
AGAIN

VICTIM SIX KILLED BY HOOKER'S POISONED MINGE

FACTORY worker met
death after JACKING

In London, a victim of the street scene of the East End, killed the hooker, the Plague, of the town of the South. According to reports, the hooker was having sex with the victim.

philosophy. The strongman "body positive" Graeco-Romanesque idealistic existentialism of Nietzsche helped me understand the inseparability of spirit and flesh, and made me start to lament the idea that "mind over matter is all that really counts". It is a stupid, naive, immature idea. Gnostic-style dualistic fundamentalism grew increasingly senseless and also existentially dysfunctional to me. This, in combination with delving quite deep into the absolutely mindblowing (in the most profound sense of that neologism) of C. G. Jung, steered me towards a kind of hero worship strongly injected with Jungian mytho-analysis (something which permeated strongly the ethics, lyrics and concepts of Slutet, by the way; thematically, Slutet was a combination of Jungian introspection, Nietzschean *Übermensch* values and agitative anti-social weirdo terror romanticism). Kierkegaard cornered me and made me realize that Christianity, after all, is not all stupid weak shit for losers, and that, sincerely, the atheists and indeed many BLACK METAL FUCKIN SATANISTS around our wonderful globe are pretty much always arguing a strawman, simply because they have no idea what their perceived enemy really is about. Herrmann Hesse's *Demian* became like a lost, beloved brother and Simone Weil really taught me the weight and value of hard work and humility. I was trying to syncretize a quite extreme individualist Nietzsche-oriented existentialist philosophy with the unhinged fervor and ecstasy of devotion to the True God and to the Holy Mother Mary and all the saints, mystics, martyrs and angels... and by that point I was sure I was steering myself onto the path of a Religious life, in some form or another. I still have no idea what is the Truth and God, but if I can approximate even an iota of it during my cursed years on this earth, I shall die a powerful and spiritually furbished man.

by the way, in the name of *humilitas*, I must mention that I am an absolute layman with these things and I claim no tremendous insight, ardent academic study or theological expertise. I just find myself thinking about these things. I gravitate towards it intuitively, mystically almost. I claim no intellectual or spiritual authority of any kind. I am just a seeker.

Secondly, on the topic of "Physicality". Can I water your ideas down to a "mens sana in corpore sano"- approach, perhaps even with an ascetic ideal to it? Now, I could be mistaken, but physicality seemed to have played an important role within Slutet? Is that the case for Southern Spruce as well?

Mens sana in corpore sano. Exactly. There has always been a central theme in Slutet and TEC which is just that - the struggle for balance between the flesh and the spirit. The pains and sufferings caused by failing with the disciplining of the body. The inclination to lusts and greed, hedonic gluttony. In the early days of Slutet, I mishandled my body grievously. Malnutrition, drug overdoses and constant drug intake

strong lack of physical exercise and deficiencies caused by nutritional and health apathy related to angst and depression. Corporality and the relation between body and mind, that classic dualism, has always been strong in Slutet and Southern Spruce as well, but in changing, evolving ways over the years. Back then, the

ideal was more radically Gnostic in nature. Definitely more... I guess devil-worshipy. The body is just a prison. Fuck the body, cut the body. Elevate the spirit at the cost and peril of the body. Even destroy the body

in the very purpose of consciousness elevation and spiritual ecstasy and that type of stuff. Back when ritualistic drug abuse self-mutilation was a thing within the End Commune. But it has evolved surely. From the book:

"I will say this: my personal "discovery" of nutrition, bodily health and my subsequent adoration of athleticism came with a newfound respect for St. Irenaeus, along with parts of the heresiology I youthfully and so stubbornly discarded as ridiculous just some half-decade ago. Now, rather, I want to develop a kind of kickboxer existentialism! A runner's faith! I echo the insistence of Irenaeus: body, body, body! It is important. We must train the body in order to be able to rule it. True devotion is managing to direct it at both faith and health. Salvation is a matter of the whole person - body and soul! I think the mysterious tribology between Man & God happens inside the human body, through the distinctly human experience of that body, along with the human soul which solicits all that. And I will not allow myself to fully sink into either of the two; soul or body. I do not think I like this fervent dichotomization anymore! I am I. I am fullness, a circle, a pre-programmed system waiting for code. I am not either-or, not in the slightest. I am a man of flesh and I strive to become Aurelian in my stoicism; Kierkegaardian in my introspection; Nietzschean in my existentialism - and Shevchenko-esque in my discipline and athleticism! These are my ideals. And no enemy will steal that from my heart."

To conclude: yes, Slutet, Southern Spruce and The End Commune is the story of a few young friends taking on the world - with body and mind - through the release-valve of underground naive, radical art. Yes - physicality, the struggle against it and the beauty of it, has always been very central to the whole thing. However, on a personal level, as I described in an answer to an earlier question, this kind of radical Gnostic body-spirit dualism and the kind of "anti-flesh" stance bordering on the cynical, that we pursued early on, has been abandoned. Both morally, spiritually, theologically, and practically.

And lastly, regarding the topic of art, I found an interesting entry; I'll just quote it:

"Art—the accumulation of the finest human efforts, there are three of them: to create beauty, to identify it when one sees it, and to remain from resentfully—or carelessly—destroying it upon the realization that it cannot be understood with reason!"

Now, when you think of art as a form of "beauty" or "a fine human effort", what is that you have in mind? Rather the Saint Matthew Passion or Transilvanian Hunger, or something else entirely? I think I can deduce that you attribute a certain power to art; do you strive towards that with the End Commune projects?

I think that art is one of those few fundamental human endeavors which truly and distinctly separates us from other species. It is very anti-bestial. It is a very human



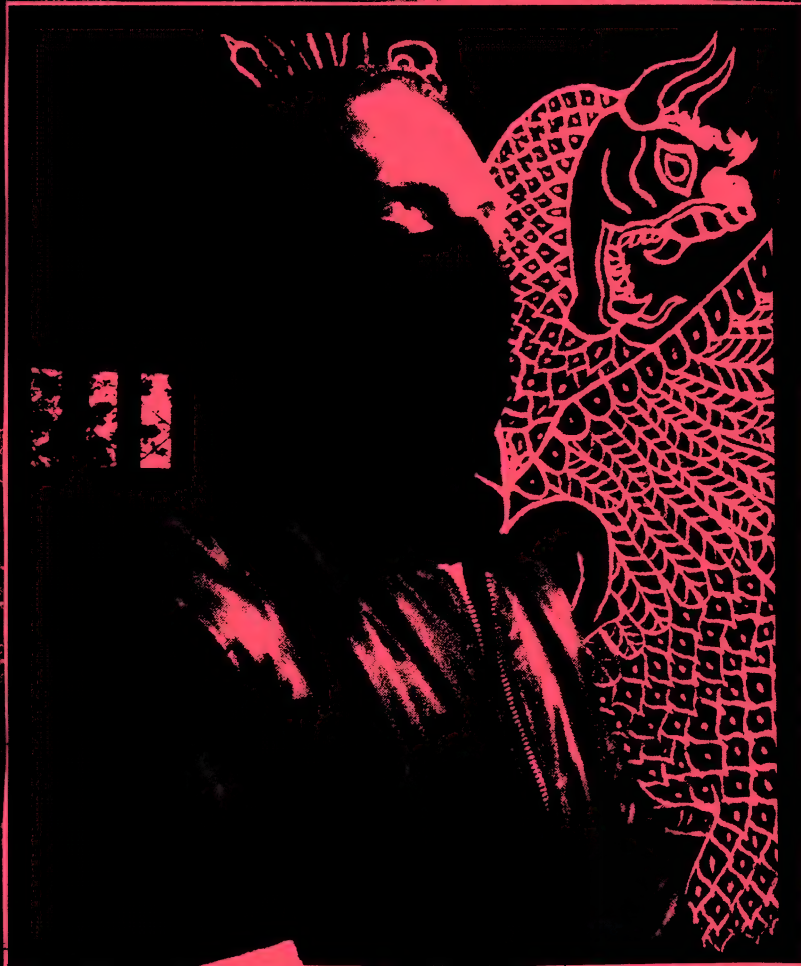
thing, and it is very connected to both our religiosity, our aesthetics and our angst. I am sure there are some anecdotal super-rare reports of some type of monkey having some manner or crude, aesthetic expression, but you get my point. No person of sane mind would even try to argue that animal endeavors of this kind can be even remotely compared to the great artworks of humanity. It is an absurd proposition and an intellectual suicide. So, once we understand that art and religion is what both separates us from the animals, and connects us to one-another as human beings, we might begin to explore them conceptually, explore them for what they truly are: art - the splendor and beauty - and religion - the unbearable meanings of the human spirit... but art somehow makes these meanings bearable somehow. I don't know why. I don't know what the hell is going on, obviously. All I understand is that art is supremely important for the human being. It seems it allows us understand the world and the human condition through the prism of talent and beauty: through the aestheticization of the human experience, and that, in extension, we treat as highly important. Art is human life beautified; aestheticized; metaphorized. Art makes the great depth approachable, as if through a tunnel or a wormhole or catacombs, some mystical entrance. We understand, from art, things beautifully; things which we otherwise would have understood as ugly, horrible, heavy, uncomfortable. But it is not with reason we come to these insights. That is the problem for modern men, and that is what that quote is talking about, I think. We are still spiritually hardwired to art, yet we scoff at its fundamental preposition that it cannot be objectively and rationally and reasonably defined and understood in its beauty. Rather, one must let go and explore the landscapes of art at spiritual peril, and certainly not with some methodology of rationalist inquiry: here is no reason that will protect you from yourself. To quote from the book:

"I must say: regarding these people in which the mystical part of themselves is rarely contended with, and for these clueless demagogues whose spiritual faculties have remained padlocked since inception with the keys to them having never been bequeathed nor even stolen - who can blame them for



their atheistic sensibilities, their rationalistic infatuations? It is not their fault precisely that they have grown up in a habitat devoid of God, but it is nevertheless their culpability. In some cases, it is not precisely their fault but it is God-damn surely not their victory either. But I cannot help my irritation: listen to their intellectual rumpus and their hot-headed babbling and preaching the religionless religion - it is like listening to an autistic kid explaining the beauty of a painting! An autist may know the brand of the colors; he will have known the width of the hairs of the brush; he may know the producer of the canvas, and he will understand the theoretical techniques the artist has made utility of! But he will not be interested in the weird darkness from which the motivation to create it - and the unexplainable appreciation of it - grows out of from the very first place... yes, listen to the maundering of the atheist, a cacophony of dying hornets falling from faith's sunset! Watch him stomp the grapes of mysteries into a fine wine of not passion and ecstasy but of arrogance, a viticulture of intellectual hubris..."

And by the way, I am talking about the whole spectrum. You ask what I have in mind when talking about art - we are talking about Michelangelo, Aboriginal cave paintings, Marina Abramovic and Varg Vikernes in the same breath here. I mean art as a human phenomenon. From "Starry Night" by Van Gogh to "Заревом над прахом" by Forest and whatever in between. From "Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence" by Caravaggio, to "Fas - Ite, Maledicti, In Ignem Aeternum" Deathspell Omega. The Venus of Willendorf, the Great Standard of Ur, Hamlet, the first Black Sabbath record. From Discharge to "Pietà". And so on.



Quite recently I read something from Ted Gioia in a book of his on Jazz music. He emphasized that "the African tradition conceptualizes music-making as the creation of sounds." This seems obvious when we speak about music, but, as Gioia explained, this is different in comparison to the Western tradition that since Pythagoras has focused on music as a mere system of notes (discrete tones, tuned in scales with twelve subdivisions). African traditional music rather drew on an infinite gradation of sounds, and not just twelve notes in a scale.

I'm bringing this up because you referred to a less rational understanding of art. Oftentimes the ritualistic or mystical character of BM music is emphasised, while one can question if that element is in fact really there? Especially compared to, say, Sufi music, shamanic drum patterns or Gnawa trance ceremonies. How "spiritually true" do you deem BM? Have you always perceived it that way?

Also: in comparison to Slutet the music of Southern Spruce seems more concise. Is your music becoming more rational?

Very interesting. I think it is "really there", sometimes. I think black metal is potentially a highly legitimate and spiritually impactful form of music. I think the combination of elements: monotony, melodicism, blast beats, atmosphere, emphasis on ecstasy (*out-of-oneseif-ness*) and power - it is a complete rejection of contemporary modern cultural standards. I think black metal attempts to bring back exactly what has been lost from western music in general. Actual power, actual soul, actual spirit, actual expression. "Make Music Art Again", kind of, lol. The unapologetic darkness combined with the epic/obscure/desolate/cold/intense and solemn feeling of black metal is what attracted me to it in the first place. I came to thrash for the riffs and to death metal for the darkness and aesthetics, but I when on to black metal for the wholeness. Black metal presented to music but with ideals and meanings behind it. With the exception of punk rock, with its in-your-face political themes, that concept was new to me. Music that is more than music. And the fundamentalism and romanticism of black metal, together with the spiritual intensity of the music honestly connects it to more traditional stuff such as the examples you mentioned: African rhythmic, Sufi trances, Yogi humming and all the rest of it. And yes, you are right: Southern Spruce is more concise in every way possible. "Love & Beauty" was a dark, deep expression of angst, distress, *sehnsucht*, *saudade*, faith, hope, hopelessness, and the longing for love and beauty. Southern Spruce we have more fun with, to be honest. Easier songs, less drugs, more mature minds. More emphasis on riffs. Slutet was not as much fun. It was serious and dark business many times. And yes, I guess SS has a more rational approach to it than Slutet. Slutet was formless, ever-transmogrifying, unpredictable. SS is punch-to-the-face simplicity in comparison.

"Train to Istanbul", the Southern Spruce EP that was released earlier this year, covers a journey by train from Uppsala to Istanbul. Presumably a lot happened during that trip and you probably don't feel like reducing it to a compressed answer in an interview but can you briefly unveil some things:

How did you or perhaps a fellow traveler end up in Erszebet Hospital?



Weird Moons Over Uppsala

That was a crazy night. Long story short: on Munich central train station we met a weird woman, she wanted to join us. We did not mind. So we jumped on the train from Munich to Budapest together. Hungarian border guards became a bit of a problem because apparently, she did not have the proper documentation (?) and our bags were full of drugs. Nothing really happened though. In the end, they didn't seemingly bother to care. Very weird encounter. When we arrive in Budapest, myself and one of my fellow travelers, we call him Svantopold, embarked on a Budapest street exploration and picked

up cocaine from a local street vendor appropriately scouting for tourist victims right outside the bus station. In any case, the coke was legit and we flew across Budapest, chilled on an island in the Danube, smoked cigarettes and talked. However, our other travel companion, we can call him Timotheos, enjoyed his time with this woman we had met. They went and had their own adventure, whatever that was. I really have no idea. Walking around, exploring, doing drugs, potentially fucking, probably. However, later that night, drug intake had reached more radical levels and the gang at one point met up and split up again, at a very sketchy night club in a dilapidated house in central Budapest. Timotheos ended up in some argument with people there, and some kind of hostility ensued. He left, but overdosed/seized/convulsed right on the street, prompting worried bystanders to call an ambulance, I guess. I wasn't personally around for this, as I, by this point, had managed to walk myself astray and lost in labyrinthine Budapest night-streets, but if I understand correctly, that is what happened. Flash forward to the morning after: myself and Svantopold awake at the shitty, dirty hostel dorm we were staying at, but there is no Timotheos to be found. This quickly became a problem, naturally. We had a train to Bucharest to catch, but our friend had vanished. Turned out he had quite a night at a Budapest psych ward, as he was so fucked up from drugs, lack of sleep and other factors that he confusingly thought the psychiatric personnel were people trying to "take him away" or "do something evil" with him, therefore he attempted to get the fuck out of there, I guess. That is why they belted him and forcibly submitted him over the night, with no real way of contacting us. We ended up going on a friend-hunt in Budapest, finally finding him with the help of a grumpy but ultimately helpful police woman, locating him to a nearby hospital. When we found him, in his hospital gown and all, we just left instantly, taking a cab straight to our Bucharest train. And that was the story of Erszebet Hospital. The Hungarian government hospital still sends Timotheos bills for his involuntary Hungarian hospital stay, lol.

Through the EP we got acquainted with Mafia Mustafa, the guy who ran a certain "Best Island Hotel". Don't know why, but I felt like checking some online reviews and, boy-o-boy, this place could literally be the worst hotel in Istanbul:

"I loved Turkey until we stayed at this hostel", "a strange man in our room doing disgusting things", "They locked us in the reception and demanded we pay extra", "the brother, who also works in the hostel chased me down the street yelling death threats and slapped me in the face"... Do you deliberately seek out these type of accommodations, like for the fuck of it?

Hahaha, no, it was a complete coincidence. We chose Best Island Hostel because of its pricing and its location, and it just turned out like it did. Simply choosing the cheapest and travelling on a budget will get you in contact with a whole bunch of crazy people. I am glad it turned out the way it did. I wonder what the fuck Mafia Mustafa is doing now, today.

How stressful is it to carry substances with you via public transport into Turkey; a country known for heavy jail sentences related to possession, use or trafficking?

It is indeed stressful but at that point, I really didn't care that much. Bensodiazepines help a lot if you want to traffic drugs. It calms you down. But yeah, of course, thinking about the consequences, the answer is yes. It is stressful haha. And also, the potential humiliation of them finding out I'm hiding the drugs up my ass. You do not want problems with Turkish border control. Especially when you have "PKK" tattooed on your chest... one of the stupidest moments of my adolescence for sure. Both the "PKK" tattoo, and smuggling narcotics into Turkey fit into that category. Pure unadulterated youthful stupidity. I've taken narcotics into Iran as well, its nerve-wrecking - what if they find it, and what if they actually care? - but I've never encountered actual problems. Good thing I have stopped with this. I have grown up. But I think they wouldn't bother too much because I always "trafficked" narcotics in the form of pills (opioids, bensodiazepines, pregabalin and Z-analogues chiefly) and not in the form of "street drugs" (powders like amphetamine or cocaine, zip bags, cannabis, obvious paraphernalia, etc). I think that is the trick. To be honest, the whole asshole thing was probably unnecessary but now here I am, answering an interview question about it, so I can't say I regret it. Stupid, stupid, stupid. But a fun little anecdote.

I assume you discovered quite a bit of music during the route; recommendations you could share with us?

Thinking back, the playlist during that travel and during those times consisted a lot of Bulgarian folk music, which was the chief discovery for me personally. The traditional Bulgarian polyphonic recordings by Filip Koutev National Folk Ensemble are amazing examples. Such a mysterious, sublime and powerful sound. Ethnic Balkan culture is fucking amazing. That trip was so good. And it has come to be one of my favorite regions of folk music, for sure. It is, if possible, greater than even Caucasus music. For reference: "Malka Moma" by Neli Andreeva & the Filip Koutev Ensemble on YouTube. It is the most famous example. Also, "Bre, Petrunko" by the same choir, especially the short 70-second 1991 version is mind-blowing. We listened a lot, also, to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th albums by Arvan Art. which complements the folk music just perfectly, and abridges it to black metal and evoking a truly rare kind of majesty. The song "Душа (Първане)" especially. This later influenced both "Jihad" and "Love & Beauty" by Slutet. "Pesma Miru" and "Balkanska Meditacija" by Djordje Ilijin. The Turkish hip hop songs "Matine Aralari" by Kolera and "Istanbul" and "Anahar" by Nefret. I have no idea what they are saying, and it doesn't matter - I am in love with the Turkish language.

REAGAN YOUTH
RUIN
A.P.P.L.E.
OBLIVION

THE



"This is what it means to be a slave."



Chimpanzee inoculated with
Syphilis for research purposes.

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WEATHERED CREST



interview with J. Meindlhumer



Let's delve right in: in an interview you did with Invisible Oranges you stated about BM that "This is also where there is little place for technical perfection, where things need to be expressed in a certain urgency. What in my opinion is the core idea of this genre". So what exactly is urging you into black metal realms? What part of you demands to be expressed through black metal music?

It's a calling that could not be muted to date. The endless spirals of the mind into the unknown, a primal broth of contradictions and negativities in any sense. Creating this music in all its intensity, pace and urgency makes me feel like I can achieve draining a few drips from this womb of black substance.

What was your introduction to Black Metal, and when did you experience the things you mentioned above for the first time. Did you encounter these elements even as a "passive listener"? In what way do your initial feelings towards the genre still seep through in the music you make today?

I got introduced into the genre by the former guitarist of Kringa's older brothers. Transylvanian Hunger, Blizzard Beasts, Det Som Engang Var and Stormblåst are some of the first ones I can remember. The first real "possession" I felt was when I found out about Vlad Tepes and other LLN bands. The fascination for this twisted darkness got a hold of me - and still does to date.

There's an obvious sense for post-punk in the music you make with Bränd, as well as the Weathered Crest EP. I noticed quite a lot of black metal musicians from the Linz area seem to have that in common (even though it doesn't always seep through in their BM and is sometimes explored via side projects). Is there an overlap between these two scenes in Linz? What's the merit of incorporating postpunk into black metal in your opinion?

When I started home recording I wasn't able to learn to play the fast and lengthy parts of the music that lead to the atmosphere I was heading for, so I stuck to simpler beats which were coming out way more natural, letting me concentrate and rise immediately into said atmospheres. Paired with melodies heavily inspired by Black Metal and electronic music this resulted in Bränd. I ended up following this path and it became part of my understanding of writing music.

I cannot speak for the other bands going into more of a punk direction, but heading for post punk was not intended. I guess this started in Kringa with TEETH's (Hagzissa, Forgotten Shrines, etc.) input, since he was more versed in the ways of heavy music. We found much interest in d-beat, and slower, more rhythmic kinds of black metal and this influenced the birth and progression of Kringa. I just started listening to punk and other genres in later years. Very few bands but very intensely.

As for the overlapping of scenes I don't know how much they really inspired each other in terms of music, but here in Linz there's a comparatively big metal scene which incorporated itself in the infrastructures of the art and punk scene in terms of shows during the recent years etc. Maybe because of that more bands from Austria are following this sound.

You mentioned your interest in d-beat and a few punk bands; I'm curious to know which ones exactly? As you pointed out yourself your projects really have a rhythmic pulse that differs from the lot of BM projects that are equally heavily inspired by punk, yet tend to go into the direction of, say, Ildjarn and Bone Awl.

With d-beat I meant the actual beat, not the genre. Shortly after TEETH and I met each other the MPDS thing was quite big and he got really into it. I was more into Misfits, Ramones, Joy Division when it came to "punk". Black Metal was always where I sought further, with other genres I stayed quite on the surface. Just later on I got further into Punk and the band that ultimately got me was DEAD MOON. In means of attitude, sound and all over, they are just one of the best bands that have ever been out there in my opinion.

Thematically Weathered Crest's Blossoming of the Paths deals with, and I'll paraphrase this from the label's description, "the fading of mankind's achievements into oblivion": This is true for mankind as a whole, but also for each of us as an individual. Does this thought sadden you?

Sometimes it does, as I can't fully let go of this kind of narcissism or whatever you call it. But I haven't had this identity crisis SO FAR. Right now I'm fine with knowing everything will fade, actually it's a calming thought.

What are in fact the main themes you explore with your bands? Does it differ from project to project?

I think it's the ways of the subconscious and it shaping our world, society and our image of nature. I write lyrics that reveal truths about myself to myself, rather than proclaiming any wisdoms or truths I WANT to bring forth. It's kinda twisted, often working from a "stream of consciousness" kinda method.

The actual lyrical themes are different in each project, but every project attacks a topic from a different perspective, or sheds a new light on the actual "thing", as I can't help myself but revolving around recurring topics that trouble my mind. So I'd say that's why I believe it's necessary for me to put these out there. To get a best possible image.

A very beautiful moment on the Blossoming of the Path LP is the poem written by Russian writer Arseni Tarkovski. We hear the writer himself, nota bene taken from the cult movie 'Stalker' (1979) directed by his son Andrej Tarkovski. Both movie and poem are quite philosophical and leave room for interpretation. What did you take from it, and why did you opt to use that fragment?

"Here summer is over As if it never happened Under the sun it's warmer Only it's not sufficient"

After I saw this movie, the start of the recitation was stuck in my head for quite some time. Just the few words, or more precisely the sound of them and the voice and tone they were spoken in, as I don't remember if there were subtitles for it. I couldn't understand a thing. Then during the night I recorded the Blossoming album, which happened some months after, the melody from the interlude triggered this earworm again, so I decided to put it on top of it. To be honest I think it's total desecration of the original that I have done that. I will never ever misuse such a work of art again.

Around the time of the release I got to know the title of the poem, looked it up and found a translation. Blew my mind! It has found an interesting place in what is the concept of the album. So the "room for interpretation" is therefore exactly what you are listening to.

I had exactly the same experience with that Tarkovski fragment: obviously I didn't know what he was saying either, but the way he recites the verse directly allured me, and still does. Did you had similar experiences with other works of art before?

Yes, definitely. So many music, or art, or even people out there. I didn't understand in the beginning, but I had this feeling of something being there, something I WANT TO discover and find out. It's a beautiful thing to experience, this connection beyond the directly comprehensible.



TÄNZ MIT!

You mentioned that you recorded Weathered Crest's Blossoming album "during the night". Do you literally record your music at night then? And more in general: does it require a specific mood or context for you to make music?

Maybe I started late in the afternoon, can't remember to be honest. But I record mostly during the night as days are too often occupied by necessities and other things one gotta do to survive. So at night, when the world seems to be asleep I feel much more free to create with less disturbances.

The mood has to be right, yes. When I have two or three days off, I take one to relax and the next day, when I got no duties, nowhere to be, owe nothing to no one, I'm ready - grab my guitar, synth, or whatever and Ta-dah: frustration! No riffs, no words, no images.

On other days I got artworks to finish, three half done recordings lying around, haven't replied in band-chats for two days - suddenly a riff won't leave my head, a concept grows around and I HAVE TO record some songs to get it out. Truly nerve-wracking sometimes. Also for the people counting on me.

Some projects rely on certain preparations for the music to flow, as there is something to be upheaved from the depths, and some music just comes without any warning. I don't know how or why it works and I also do not want to know. I do not want to tame or control this stream - I am at its mercy.

I assume Födweg is mainly your way to release music of yours, as well as local and/or befriended projects. Same thing seems to be true for your previous label Voidland Shelter. What were the accomplishments of those labels that were most rewarding for you personally? Has Födweg been discontinued by the way?

I think the whole discography is my personal accomplishment with it so far. Finding people having a same way of experiencing the world and similar ways of expression. Every release shapes the character of the label and I'm glad for every project that found its place there. Födweg will be up again when my time allows it.

(the interview ends somewhat abruptly here due to its timing coinciding with the Kringa / Mispyrming tour)





boundless human stupidity